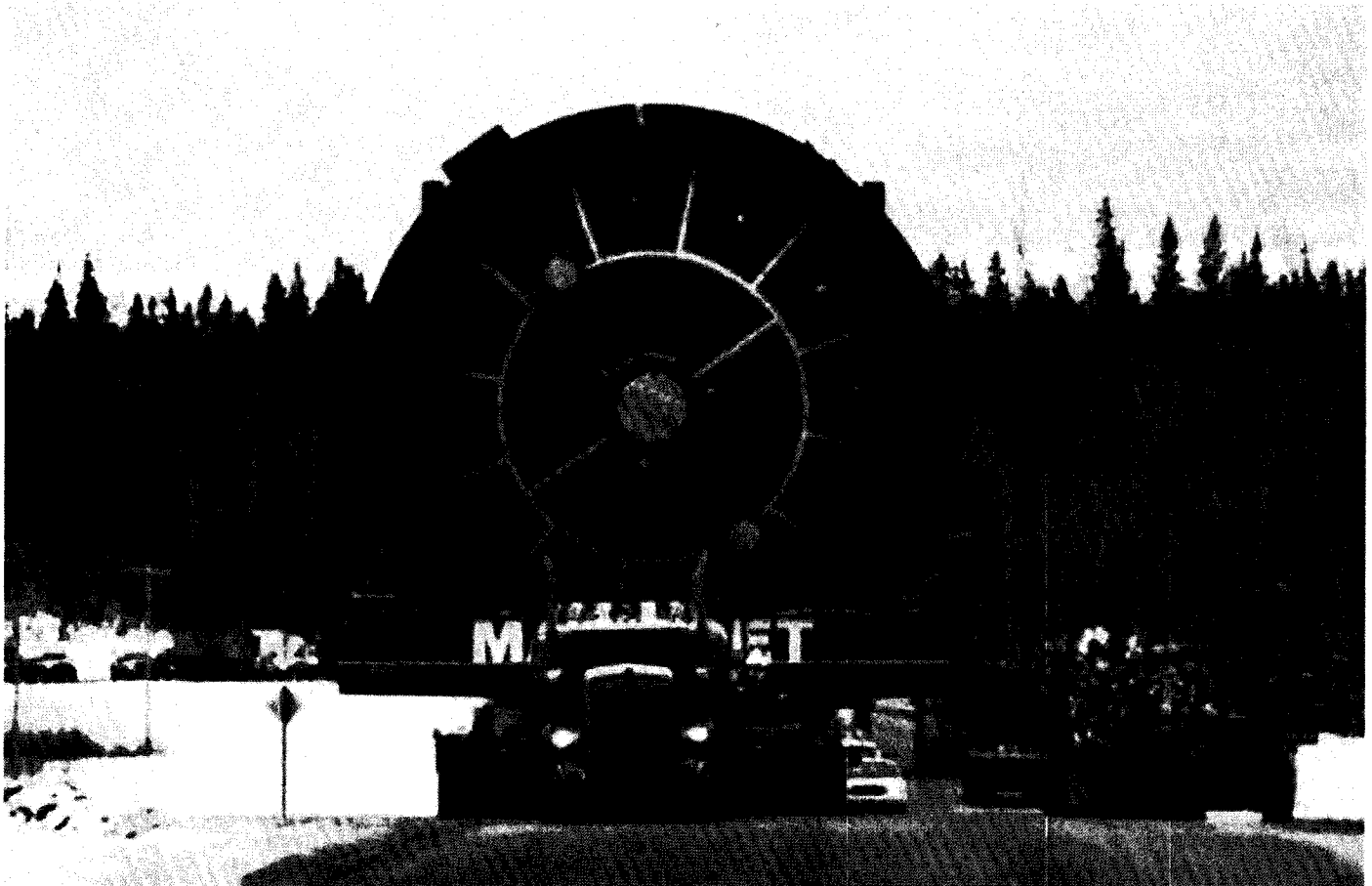


HB 507 - Safe Montana Highways Act

As Montanans, we understand the importance of our roadways for commerce, travel, and recreation. HB 507 seeks to protect these traditional and important uses from the private, exclusive use by out-of-state corporations to transport massively oversized loads that will restrict the flow of commerce, damage the roadways, create unsafe road conditions and inhibit the ability to travel and recreate along our scenic highways. Such use by oversized loads threatens the safety of the traveling public, the economic productivity of Montana businesses, and the quality of life that we enjoy as residents of this great state.

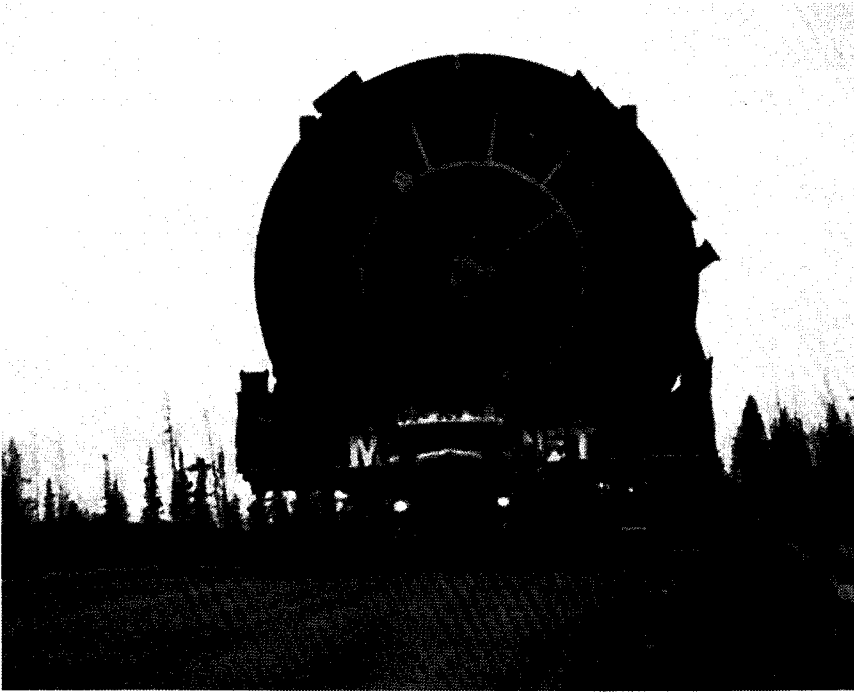
HB 507, the Safe Montana Highways Act, is common sense legislation that that does not outright prohibit megaloads, but ensures that any megaloads coming through Montana are in the best interest of the citizens of this state. *With the safety and well-being of Montanans in mind*, HB 507:

- **defines a Megaload** as being over 250,000 lbs, among other criteria, and creates a detailed permitting and reporting requirement for those vehicles meeting the definition;
- **protects landowners and business owners** along a proposed route from the harmful impacts of megaload movement;
- **requires bonding** for megaloads to protect taxpayers from the undue burden of accelerated road and bridge damage;
- requires that any **bridges along the route are inspected** for safety and feasibility before the load is permitted to travel;
- Requires **alternative routes of travel** to be analyzed;
- requires **extensive public comment periods** and public hearings along a proposed route at least 6 months prior to any megaload travel to ensure full public participation in the permitting process;
- **allows the Dept. of Transportation to deny a permit** if certain permitting criteria are not followed by the permittee, or if the megaloads are found to be economically harmful to Montana or pose undue risk to the public.



The Facts

One fully loaded axle on an 18-wheeler does the same damage to pavement as 10,000 passenger cars. When added together, the **cumulative weight of the 207 proposed shipments by ExxonMobil will be the equivalent of 35-40 million passenger cars**, causing excessive wear and tear on already ailing roads. Taxpayers will be stuck with the costs of road repairs long into the future.



The potential loss of jobs, wages, and business revenue to Montana's tourism and outdoor recreation industry from the Heavy Haul project are significant. Spending in 2007 by out of state, non-resident visitors to Missoula County alone was \$366 million dollars. Even small reductions in tourism and outdoor recreation of 5% to 10% on a \$4.3 billion dollar industry would represent a serious economic hit on the Montana economy.

Of the more than 4500 patients treated at the Clearwater Valley Hospital Emergency Room last year, 85% were transported by private vehicle, not by ambulance. Approximately half of these emergency runs were made on U.S. 12. Imperial Oil and Exxon Mobil's shipments could block the road for up to 45 minutes at a time, and could be the

difference between patient survival and fatality

ExxonMobil's transportation plan assumes that Montana highways are basically "empty" at night. However, Missoula County, alone, which covers approximately 100 miles of the twisty route, experiences 300 accidents per year between the hours of 8 PM and 4 AM, during which time the Heavy Haul would be operating.

Invasive species cost Idaho and Montana taxpayers millions of dollars every year. Road construction, maintenance, and the transport of foreign-made modules will increase the likelihood of the spread of invasive species in the region.

The establishment of a permanent industrial corridor will lower home values at a time when homeowners are already struggling to break even on their investments.

The transportation plans require the public to pull off the highway at numerous locations onto gravel turnouts, some directly beside steep drop-offs into rivers and gullies that have no guard rails and notoriously weak shoulders. For motorhomes, logging trucks, or other commercial vehicles, such pull-outs will be dangerous at best.

In 2007, Texas taxpayers shouldered the burden of increased heavy haul traffic when the DOT spent more than \$23 million in road rehabilitation funds in one county alone.

We the people of Montana grateful to God for the quiet beauty of our state, the grandeur of our mountains, the vastness of our rolling plains, and desiring to improve the quality of life, equality of opportunity and to secure the blessings of liberty for this and future generations do ordain and establish this constitution.

- Preamble to the Montana State Constitution.

